

CICERONE

WALKING THE CUMBRIA WAY

Ulverston to Carlisle –
main route with mountain alternatives



John Gillham

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**ULVERSTON TO CARLISLE – MAIN ROUTE WITH
MOUNTAIN ALTERNATIVES**

by John Gillham

CICERONE

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Route symbols on OS map extracts (for OS legend see printed OS maps)

-  route
-  alternative route
-  start point
-  finish point
-  alternative start
-  alternative finish
-  route direction

Features on the overview map

-  County/Unitary boundary
 -  National boundary
 -  Urban area
 -  National Park
 -  Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- | | | | |
|---|------|---|------|
|  | 200m |  | 800m |
|  | 75m |  | 600m |
|  | 0m |  | 400m |

GPX files

for all routes can be downloaded free at www.cicerone.co.uk/1133/GPX



The 'foul weather route' down from Dash Falls (Stage 4)

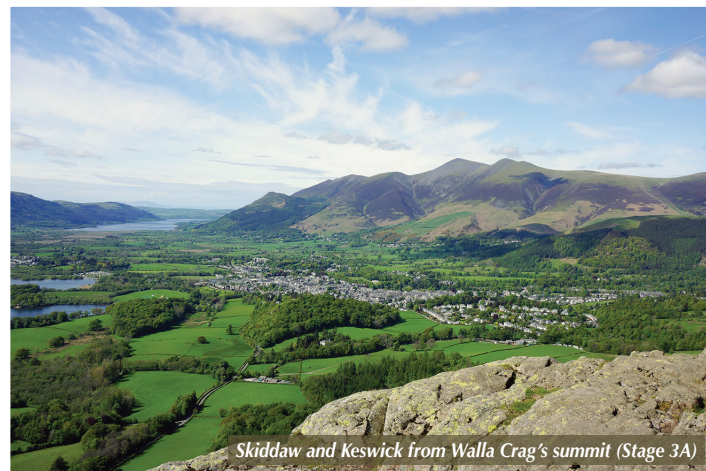


The leafy beauty of Borrowdale seen here at Gowder Dub near Castle Crag (Stage 3)

Last look at the Lakes from the path beneath Lonscale Fell (Stage 4)



INTRODUCTION



Skiddaw and Keswick from Walla Crag's summit (Stage 3A)

Cumbria sits pretty at the north-western edge of England. Its beauty is timeless, one that inspired Wordsworth and the other Lakeland Romantic poets – Coleridge, Ruskin, Keats and Shelley – to stay and write in this place of lakes, riverside woodland and high fell. If you're looking for a place to walk, where better than here? And if you're looking for a long-distance walk that you can do in a week, look no further than the Cumbria Way.

At just over 73 miles (117km) long the Cumbria Way allows you time to walk but also time to look around and be inspired by these great landscapes too. It takes in all that is best in the Lake District – views of the

majestic fells, lakeshore promenades and strolls through woodland, past waterfalls, picturesque cottages and fine inns. Devised by local Ramblers' Association groups during the 1970s, the route starts in Ulverston, not far from the shores of Morecambe Bay, and finishes in the city of Carlisle.

The official route is largely a low-level walk though the valleys of Cumbria and suitable for any experienced walkers. The mountain route included here is not an official variant but offers a more challenging, high-level alternative for those who prefer the summits to the valleys and the passes. Both are ideal for campers and youth hostellers as much as those

WALKING THE CUMBRIA WAY

preferring a bit of comfort or even luxury on their holidays. The latter group can ease through leafy Cumbria in style and dine in some of the country pubs for which the Lake District is famous but there are also plenty of good campsites and youth hostels throughout the journey.

THE CUMBRIA WAY

The walk out of Ulverston starts well, on a little becksides path, and more often than not the continuing route is pretty. However there are lots of field paths to negotiate and it's hard to get up any momentum. By the time you get to Gawthwaite you'll feel you won't make it to Coniston – but you will. The second half of the day seems to go more quickly than the first and

the paths get easier to follow and you will be drawn on by glimpses of the Coniston Fells peeping above low hills and moors on the horizon.

The Lake District proper starts small, with Beacon Tarn, a lake in miniature, surrounded by small but rocky and perfectly-formed hills. And those Coniston Fells get nearer and nearer, their rock faces more and more defined. Towards the end of the day you're strolling on easy paths by Coniston Water, staring across at Ruskin's Brantwood home and contemplating Wordsworth's daffodils. (If you're a month or two too late you can buy the postcard!)

The next day the Cumbria Way goes into the heart of the Lake District, taking in more tarns, waterfalls in the woods and whitewashed



Tarn Hows (Stage 2)

cottages with rose gardens. It enters Great Langdale, where the rocks form great buttresses and gullies and the mountains become distinctive and tantalising temples. Beneath them sits the Old Dungeon Ghyll Hotel – a fine place to stop, eat and discuss tomorrow's route with fellow travellers.

You look to the skies for the next day's route and there's no obvious way out. The route goes over the 500m Stake Pass. It's steep but short-lived and the path is easy to follow. Next you tackle the lovely Langstrath, a wild, uninhabited valley with nothing but a bouldery river and bouldery mountainsides for comfort. It's a long way to Keswick from Langdale, maybe too long, so when you see the beautiful, ever-so-green and lush Borrowdale you may feel the urge to make this an overnight stop.

Rosthwaite and Grange are pleasantly peaceful places in the middle of these beautiful mountain and riverscapes.

Derwent Water is a prince among the Lake District lakes and that view of Skiddaw's smooth pastel pink and green-shaded slopes is exquisite. Keswick at its north end is lively, a place to restock, maybe recover, before the long day over the Back o' Skidda to Caldbeck. Those who stopped at Rosthwaite are lucky as long as they've pre-booked the hostel at Skiddaw House. They will find they've discovered one of the most remote and romantic locations en route and they will have shortened the next day to Caldbeck.

As long as you're confident enough about the weather to ignore the inferior foul weather Bassenthwaite route, the day out of

It all begins here at Ulverston's Cumbria Way sculpture





Rosthwaite in Borrowdale (Stage 3)

Keswick will be highlighted by reaching the summit of High Pike, highest place on the whole of the official Cumbria Way at over 2000 feet. It's an airy place with an orientation table to show you the hundreds of hills in view, including the Scottish ones across the Solway Firth.

Looking north you can see that there are no more big hills left in England. Between you and your destination there are low ridges and mile upon mile of pastureland. The last day will be remembered for its riverside scenery. The Caldew, which you first saw near Skiddaw House, will guide you all the way, including through the streets of Carlisle, where the cathedral quarter is rich in the histories of both England and Scotland. It's a fitting end to a truly memorable walk.

THE MOUNTAIN WAY

If all this is not exciting enough, why not add in some mountains? The mountain variants described come down to meet the official route at convenient points, allowing you to mix and match according to the weather and your inclination or mood, and if followed in total only add about 3 miles (5km) to the overall distance. The official Cumbria Way passes beneath the Conistون range but by leaving it at Torver the mountain route takes in Goat's Water, Swirl How and Great Carrs. It then descends to Slater's Bridge, one of the prettiest ancient packhorse bridges in Cumbria, before rejoining the 'Way' at Elterwater on the edge of Great Langdale.

The moraine scenery of Stake Pass above Great Langdale is fascinating but climbing beneath the buttresses



The wild beauty of the Back o' Skidda with Skiddaw House sheltering among the larch trees (Stage 4)

of Bowfell, past Angle Tarn and onto the high peaks of Allen Crag and Glaramara is more spectacular. The views of Borrowdale that open up on the descent from Thornythwaite Fell make the day worthwhile on their own. Walla Crag comes next. It's not big but it's got a well-sculpted rock and heather top with superb views of Derwent Water, Bassenthwaite Lake and the surrounding fells.

The big one is Skiddaw, one of the Lake District's 3000 footers. If the day is a fine one Skiddaw is so close that you've got to do it. If the day is too big you can drop down from the summit to the hostel at Skiddaw House. Either way, Great Calva, Knott and High Pike can be included in a high-level traverse to Caldbeck.

Cumbria runs out of mountains beyond Caldbeck so the

now-hardened mountain walker can take it easy and follow the official route by the Caldew into Carlisle, knowing that they have completed the 'Cumbria Mountain Way'.

WILDLIFE AND PLANTS

Once much of Cumbria would have been covered by oak woodland but today's mosaic of diverse landscapes has been shaped by widespread farming and grazing by deer and sheep. Sheep and cow pastures form a large part of the early Cumbria Way landscape between Ulverston and Gawthwaite and although you'll see some wildflowers the continuous grazing means species are limited. The thin acid soils of the Conistون foothills mean that bracken, rushes and cotton grass proliferate with the odd birch



Above Stable Harvey Moss (Stage 1)

tree and juniper bushes scattered across the fellsides. In the marshy areas by Beacon Tarn you'll also see bog myrtle, a deciduous shrub about a metre tall with oval leaves. Its oils are claimed to repel biting insects.

Although adders are quite common in the dry moors and mountains of the Lake District you'll probably not see any on this route. If you are lucky enough to see one basking on a rock, leave it be for it will almost certainly slither away into the undergrowth when it spots you.

As the path makes its way through mountain valleys there will be ravens and buzzards soaring on thermals around the crags above, searching for carrion. The sheep are still here in the low fell country so the main colour will be provided by the larger 'less

tasty' flowers like the bright yellow gorse and the purple-pink foxgloves. Primroses, bluebells, wood anemone, wood sorrel, herb robert and red campion will be confined to woodland and hedgerow.

Many of the modern forests are made up of spruce, pine and larch, although the old coppiced woodland still covers the central regions of the park, especially so between Coniston and Langdale and in Borrowdale. The high rainfall in the sessile oakwoods of Borrowdale has helped propagate lichens, liverworts and insects, which in turn have offered a habitat for various owls, peregrine falcons, pied flycatchers and greater spotted woodpeckers. In the rivers and streams there are otters and you may well see the dipper, a small active



The Yewdale Fells and a waterfall from Back Guards Plantation above Coniston (Stage 2)

STAGE 1

Ulverston to Coniston (or Torver)

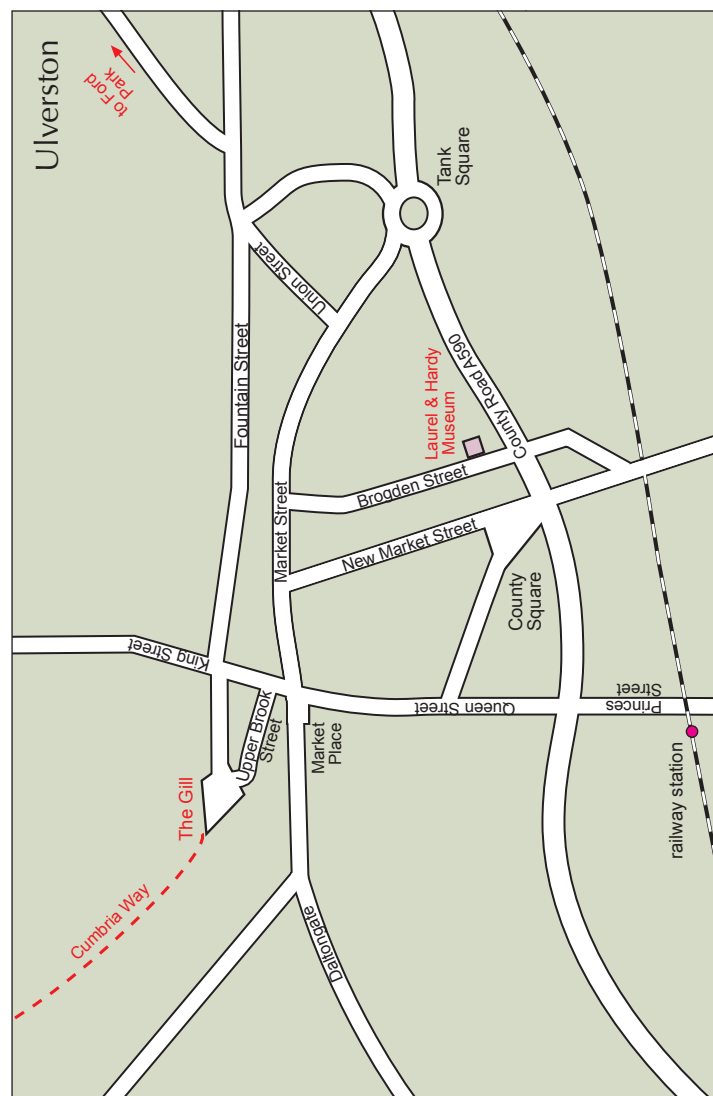
Start	The Gill, Ulverston
Distance	15½ miles (25km); 12 miles (19km) to Torver
Ascent	615m
Approx time	7–8 hours; 6–7 hours to Torver
Terrain	farmland, country lane, low fell and level lakeside path
Map	OS Explorer OL6 South Western area
Supplies	no cafés, shops or pubs before Torver which does have one shop with general supplies

It's all too easy to dwell too long exploring Ulverston's cobbled streets or watching the world go by in one of its cosy cafés but if you intend to walk to Coniston you need to be off by 11am at the latest. The tree-lined stream out of town makes a pleasant start but the early part of the route is bitty, across pastures that can be muddy after rain and through farmyards and along country lanes.

By the time you come to Gawthwaite you think you're not going to make it, but the navigation soon gets simpler. Views of the Coniston Fells become more frequent and more spectacular, the craggy Blawith Fells get closer and closer, and before you know it you're walking beside the idyllic Beacon Tarn. And the day (if it ends in Coniston) ends in a glorious promenade by the peaceful shores of Coniston Water. You may even be early enough for a boat trip on the Gondola.

The Way begins at the Cumbria Way monument in a square known as **The Gill**. In the north-west corner, marked by a blue 'start of the Cumbria Way' plaque a tarred path continues by a small stream. Turn left over a footbridge to cross the stream. On reaching a lane double back right on the nearside of that lane, following the direction set by a Cumbria Way fingerpost across fields, eventually to join a farm track to **Old Hall Farm**.

After turning right and passing through the farmyard and the farmhouse but just before a newer house, turn left through a gap stile in a wall – a fingerpost marks the



ULVERSTON



The Sir John Barrow Monument
atop Hoad Hill

Ulverston is a busy but attractive market town sited on coastal pastureland bordering the wide Leven Estuary. It is sheltered to the north by low grassy hills and connected to the sea by the 1¼-mile Ulverston

Canal. Completed in 1796 the canal opened up maritime trade in timber, coal, iron, copper and gunpowder. Ships were built here and passenger ferries linked the now prosperous town with Liverpool. Unfortunately the coming of the Furness Railway in 1846 brought about the slow decline of the canal and by the end of the Second World War it ceased to operate.

The town is first recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 as Ulureston, which comes from the words *Úlfarr* (a Norse name meaning wolf warrior) and *tūn* (a settlement – town or village), and it was granted its market charter by Edward I in 1280. The market is still held on Thursdays and Saturdays.

Looking up to the town's skyline, Hoad Hill's summit is topped by a white tower that looks remarkably like a lighthouse. Built in 1850 to commemorate Sir John Barrow, who in 1804 became the Admiralty's Second Secretary, it was indeed modelled on the third Eddystone Lighthouse (viewing platform open: Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays 1pm–5pm, from Easter to the end of October, when the flag on the hill is flying; Ford Park at the foot of the hill has an excellent café and bistro with outdoor seating, <http://ford-park.org.uk>).

Ulverston has community spirit – you'll feel that when you arrive. It advertises itself as a 'Festival Town' and you may well be lucky enough to come here when one of the many is being held such as Ulverston WalkFest, the Dickensian Festival or one of the music festivals or Buddhist festivals. The community spent ten years raising £60,000 for bronze statues of film star comedians Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy, which stand outside the Coronation Hall. Laurel, whose real name was Arthur Stanley Jefferson, was born in June 1890 in Argyle Street, Ulverston and, although he made his name in the US, he



The Laurel and Hardy statues

revisited the town with 'Ollie' in 1947 when the townsfolk gave them a tumultuous reception. (Laurel and Hardy Museum, Brogden Street, open: 10am–5pm Tues, Thurs, Fri, Sat, Sun, <http://laurel-and-hardy-museum.co.uk>)

If you walk along King Street from the Market Cross and turn right down the ginnel of Bolton's Place, also along Lower Brook Street on the other side of the Bodycare building you'll see the most amazing and colourful murals. Organised by the Clancy Youth Group and painted by Artist Gill Barron along with Ulverstonians young and old, the murals celebrate the town's 29 festivals and the life of Sir John Barrow. The hundreds of figures include St George, three

dragons and a damsel in distress and illustrate the Pantomime Horse Race, egg rolling and the Lantern procession.

George Fox, founder of the Quaker movement, visited Ulverston many times to visit Judge Fell and his wife Margaret at nearby Swarthmoor Hall (Swarthmoor Hall, Swarthmoor Hall Lane, open Mon–Fri 10.30am–4.30pm, Sun 1.30pm–4.30pm, <http://swarthmoorhall.co.uk>).

Conishead Priory to the south east of the town is well worth a visit if you have time – you could even include it in the walk and use it as a coastal starting point. The 12th-century Augustinian Priory was founded in 1160 by Gamelde Pennington as a hospital for the 'poor, decrepit, indigent and lepers' of the Ulverston area. It became a priory 28 years later and then was dismantled following the Dissolution of the Monasteries. The current Gothic building dates back to 1821, built for Colonel Braddyll, whose family, resided here for two centuries. By the 1970s the building lay empty and decaying but in 1976 it became the home to the monks of the Manjushri Kadampa Meditation Centre who set about renovating the buildings and building a new temple based on traditional Buddhist architecture. Today, the priory, temple and wooded grounds are open to the public. (Conishead Priory, Conishead Priory Road (A5087 Coast Road) Ulverston, open Mon–Sat 11am–5pm, Sun 12–5pm; grounds from dawn to dusk, <http://nkt-kmc-manjushri.org>)

www.visitulverston.com

spot. Over another stile at the back of the farmhouse the route angles half right (NW) across fields, aiming for a stile at the right edge of woodland. Beyond the stile follow the woodland edge and go over another stile before climbing towards the large house of **Bortree Stile** on the hillside ahead. The path follows a streamlet and stays to the left of the house and its pleasant gardens, then goes through a gate into woodland. A narrow path continues by the streamlet then crosses it on a slab footbridge before entering high pastures.

Looking to the right you'll see the rooftops of **Ulverston** beneath Hoad Hill and its monument, with the waters of Morecambe Bay and the distant hills of Bowland and Yorkshire Dales forming the backdrop.

Keep to the right of high ground and pass through a small hollow in the field to a stile on its far side. Beyond the stile the path continues through the hollow, but now among rock-strewn, gorse-scattered pastures. Over a step stile in a cross-wall the path crosses a field towards the farmhouse of **Higher Lath**, where it meets a country lane.

Here the Cumbria Way has been modified avoiding the section through Newbiggin. Turn right along the lane for about 170m (557ft). The new path turns left through a crudely signed farm gate before heading north on a furrowed track across a field. Go through the right of two gates and continue

north to pass through another gateway. Beyond this angle right across the third field, go through a gate at the bottom, then follow a grass ramp before angling right to a wall corner by a wooden electricity pylon. Descend a few metres to a line of trees to meet the original route by a stile and stream crossing at SD 278 808. A waymarker arrow highlight the route NNW towards the left side of the **Stony Crag** Farm complex.

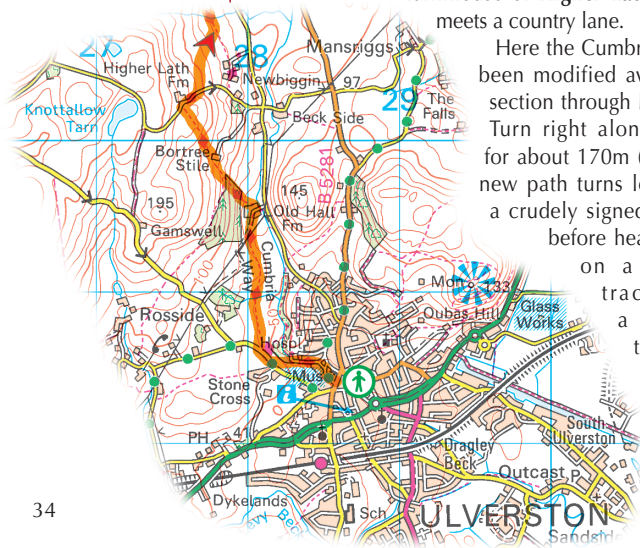
Behind the farmhouse angle right, away from a farm track, through a gate and follow the wall on the right before turning right through a waymarked gate and continuing with the field boundary to the left.

On nearing **Hollowmire** farm a Cumbria Way sign guides the way on a short enclosed grass path leading to the farmhouse. Turn right through the farmyard and follow the farm lane out to the road, where you should turn left.

A wooden signpost at a left hand bend points the way right through a farm gate, beyond which a faint path leads across more fields to the 19th-century slate and sandstone **church** of St John the Evangelist. An enclosed

*St John's Church near
Broughton Beck*

map continues
on page 36



map continues on
page 38

track to the left of the church leads to the road, where you turn right. Turn left at a T-junction, then right along the lane leading to the village of **Broughton Beck**.

Where the road veers right in the heart of the village, turn left on a cul-de-sac. The lane bends left then the tarmac ends. Continue along a track, soon coming to the stream (Broughton Beck). One path fords the stream, but the one you want goes straight ahead through a metal farm gate. The way continues past large outbuildings and through a long field before veering right at a signpost and passing through a wall step stile into the next field. Angle half left to locate a slabbed slate bridge across the beck near the left edge of the field. Turn left by the stream's banks and go over a stile. The route now follows the left-hand field boundaries (walls and hedges) across several fields to join a rough track, which climbs to an unfenced lane beneath a rugged low hill, Lowick Beacon (**211m spot height** on the map).

Turn left along the lane, passing **Knapperthaw** farm. Take the right fork lane at the far end of the farm, then fork left on a shortcut track by the next junction. Now take the track opposite, which takes the route towards **Keldray** farm.

By now the mountains of **Dow Crag**, **Coniston Old Man** and **Wetherlam** can be seen clearly above the nearby woods and hillside and the Lake District proper feels a little nearer.

Beyond a gate before the house turn left – the place is marked by a ground-level signpost pointing up wooded slopes.

Ignore the first stile on the left but climb steps to cross the stile above. Beyond this turn right along the upper edge of the woods and then the farmhouse. After another stile veer slightly left up the sloping field to a gate in the middle of the far wall – if you follow the line of wooden pylons you'll see this gate a few metres to the left. Follow the top wall of the next field.

Over a stile the route follows a path enclosed by walls. This leads to the first houses of **Gawthwaite**. Follow a tarred lane past more houses to reach the busy **A5092**. ▶

Cross the road before taking a minor tarred lane staggered very slightly to the left between the houses. Take the right fork, then the left beyond the last house onto a walled lane signed 'public way to Gawthwaite Land'. This climbs past quarries and high pastures, with the valley of the **River Crake** and the little wooded hills beyond leading the eyes to their first glimpse of Coniston Water.

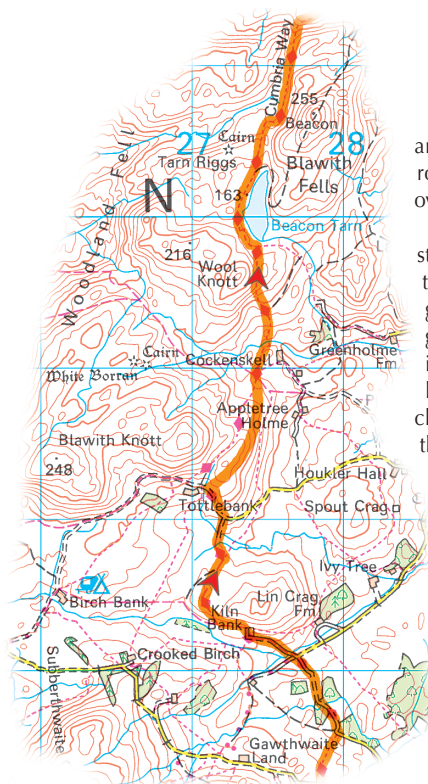
After about two thirds of a mile along the lane and just beyond a gate by a long narrow stand of trees, take the right fork track descending high pastures before winding around three sides of **High Stennerley**. The track becomes a tarred lane beneath the attractive gardens of the farmhouse and descends further to a country lane at **Kendall Ground**.

Turn right along the lane for 30m before turning left to follow the direction set by a wooden fingerpost and tractor wheel-tracks. Where the track divides take the right fork, which keeps higher ground to the left. The narrow path comes to a gate with an adjacent step stile then fades, but go right alongside an overgrown hedge – noting a waymarking arrow on a boulder.

Keep the rushy ground to your right and ignore a tall wooden post, which would have you fighting a way through thickets. ▶ Beyond this the path maintains direction, following a derelict, grassed-over wall to the right. This leads to a stile in a drystone wall (only visible at the last moment of the slight descent). Beyond the stile descend a few paces to a country lane, where you should turn left.

Now the route has entered the Lake District National Park, although it will still be traversing pastureland rather than mountainside for a while yet.

It will hopefully rot away and confuse no more.



The lane winds through trees and among pastureland scattered with rocks and soon nears a landscape overlooked by low craggy hills.

Where the lane turns right go straight on along a tarred farm road to **Kiln Bank**. Turn right through a gate just past the farm and follow a grass track, which, beyond the buildings, veers left to follow a wall on the left. Take the signed right fork track climbing open hillside. On reaching the top of the hill it fades but boot marks and tyre tracks are still visible as they thread their way between scattered thorn trees.

There's a slight bend to the right before coming to a gate and ladder stile in a cross-wall. Beyond this a clear track arcs left, eventually to meet a high country lane. Turn left along the lane with the whitewashed **Tottlebank** farm in the distance backed up by the even craggier Blawith Fells.



Approaching Beacon Tarn in the Blawith Fells

STAGE 1 – ULVERSTON TO CONISTON (OR TORVER)

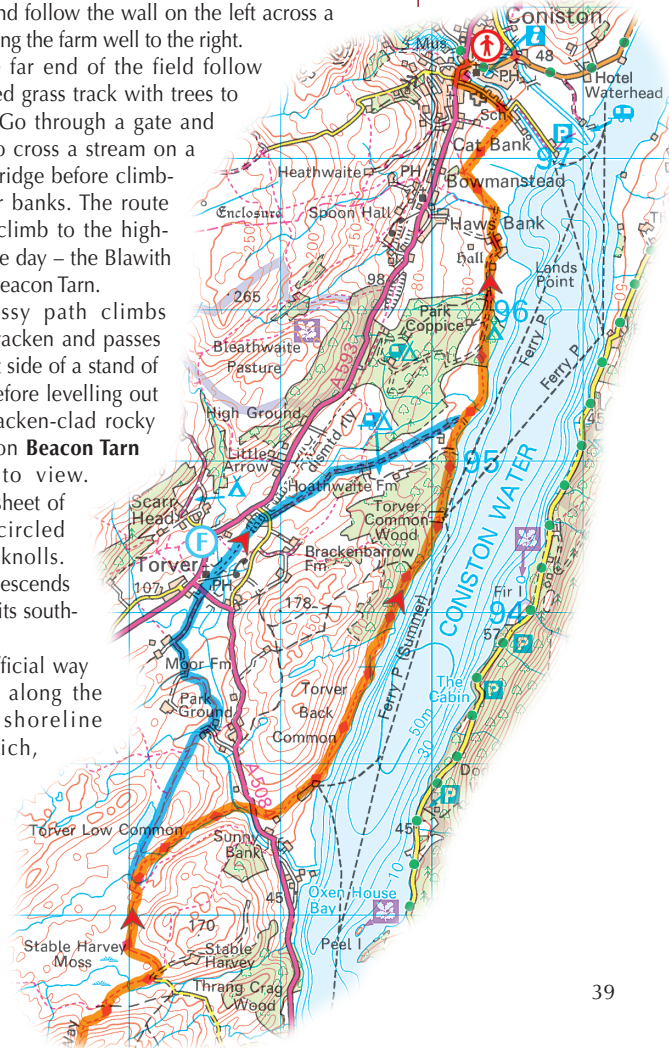
Just before the farm leave the lane for a signed grass track on the right climbing hillsides patched with bracken. ▶ After scaling the shoulder of Tottlebank Fell it descends towards **Cockenskell** farm and joins a track coming in from the right. Just beyond this go through a gate on the right and follow the wall on the left across a field, keeping the farm well to the right.

At the far end of the field follow an enclosed grass track with trees to the right. Go through a gate and descend to cross a stream on a little footbridge before climbing the far banks. The route will now climb to the highlights of the day – the Blawith Fells and Beacon Tarn.

A grassy path climbs through bracken and passes to the right side of a stand of conifers before levelling out among bracken-clad rocky knolls. Soon **Beacon Tarn** comes into view. It's a fine sheet of water encircled by rocky knolls. The path descends slightly to its southern shores.

The official way continues along the western shoreline path, which,

This begins at SD 271 882 and is not the route as shown on current OS maps.



although wetter underfoot, is easier. At the far end of the tarn a grass path climbs in a bracken-scattered hollow to arrive at a narrow col. The path now hugs the crag-fringed hillslopes on the right, descending to a marshy basin, where it levels off again. At the far end of the basin, at a spot marked by a cairn next to a wind-warped tree, the path angles right and eases down towards the marshy **Stable Harvey Moss**.

Among the wild, undulating terrain of the moss and the beiges, golds and reds of the moor grasses there's another blue tarn, known to some as Torver Tarn and to others as Throng Moss Reservoir (it's not named on current maps).

The view is punctuated by rustic wooden electricity pylons, which somehow don't detract from its charm that much, and isolated thorn trees. But they're all bit part players on a stage dominated by the **Coniston Fells** beyond. To the left Dow Crag displays its cliffs and gullies; Coniston Old Man shows less crag but has a fine conical shape and Wetherlam's long lumpy ridge completes the scene.

Take a note here of the farmhouse (or the trees enshrouding it, in summer!) on the nearby pastured hillside (**Stable Harvey**) – that's where we're heading. Stay with the prominent narrow path, which veers left towards a large crag, beneath which it curves right to trace the foot of a low rock and grass ridge. The path fords Black Beck. Beyond this it climbs one of those knolls on the low ridge before joining a tarmac road climbing towards Stable Harvey farm.

Just before reaching its entrance gate turn left following a signed bridleway track. At the next junction of tracks take the higher right fork. Although both will do – they rejoin later – the right fork is usually drier underfoot.

The track veers left at a waymarker post and soon divides again. ◀ Take the right fork, which fords Mere Beck. The beck cuts a pleasant valley that will lead the route down to the Coniston road.

The path going straight ahead is the Torver link (see below).



Coniston Water and the Sunny Bank Jetty

A grass path descends the valley, which is now greener and with more trees and juniper bushes. It crosses Torver Beck before climbing to a roadside gate. Across the busy **A5084** (take care) a good track arcs gradually left and comes down to the shores of **Coniston Water** by the short jetty at **Sunny Bank**. A delightful and easy path takes the route along this tree-lined shoreline, past the launch landing station at Hoathwaite.

Across the waters lies the grand mansion of **Brantwood**, once owned by John Ruskin, a renowned artist, poet, political thinker and art critic from the Victorian era. It is now owned by the National Trust and run as a museum dedicated to him.

The path veers left inland a little and passes through the Coniston Hall campsite using its access track.

Coniston Hall is an impressive stone and slate building with four enormous chimneys and fine mullioned windows. It dates back to the 16th century and is owned by the National Trust.

Follow the lane from Coniston Hall but, just beyond the sailing club and farm outbuildings, leave it for a gravelly track on the right. This takes the route across fields to Lake Road, where you turn left into **Coniston** village.

Torver link

Just beyond the path's left turn towards Mere Beck (SD 280 922) the Torver link diverts from the official Coniston route. Instead of following the Cumbria Way down the valley of Mill Beck go straight on to cross the beck higher up. The path comes to and follows the shores of Torver Tarn/Throng Moss Reservoir (not named on current maps).

The path you need soon climbs above the shores but make sure you don't follow subsidiary paths to the hill-tops – that hard-won ascent would have to be lost. Follow the path north over wild moorland before descending to a gate on the edge of access land. Beyond this an enclosed path leads down to the cottages by Mill Bridge (not named on OS Landranger maps – SD 285 932). Don't cross Torver Beck here but go through a gate to the left of the large former mill.

Through this an enclosed path takes you parallel to the beck at first before veering away left to a tarred farm lane near **Moor Farm**. Turn right along this and follow the lane out to a T-junction, where you turn right, passing Shepherd House caravan site before coming to the main road. Turn left into **Torver**.

*The old mill from
Mill Bridge*



CONISTON

*The Coniston
Gondola*



When they built Coniston village, they built it beneath a grand mountain that would share its name, and built it out of the rock hewn from that mountain. It's not chocolate-box pretty like Wordsworth's Grasmere but you can see why poet and philosopher John

Ruskin settled here in 1871. The view across Coniston Water from his house at Brantwood (open Mar–Nov 10.30am–5pm; Nov–Mar 10.30am–4pm; www.brantwood.org.uk) shows the little village with its slate church, shops and cottages sheltering in lakeside pastures, with Coniston Old Man rearing up from the backyards in true alpine fashion: village and mountain are inseparable. Before his death, Ruskin declined to be buried in style at Westminster Abbey instead opting to be laid to rest in Coniston's St Andrew's churchyard. His grave is embellished with a fine cross made from Tilberthwaite green slate.

Coniston was powered by hydroelectricity from Church Beck during the 1930s but subsequent heavy taxation of the 1950s forced its inhabitants to return to the National Grid. However in 2007 another hydroelectric scheme adapted from the same site was commissioned and today supplies 300kw of power.

Donald Campbell brought fame to the lake, setting four of his seven world speed records here in the 1950s. Having set a seventh record (290mph) in Western Australia in 1964, he returned to Coniston Water three years later for further attempt. His boat, Bluebird K7, was seconds away from another record when its nose lifted and catapulted into the air at over 300mph, killing Campbell instantly. Donald Campbell is still the only person to hold both land and water speed records at the same time. Divers recovered his remains and the wreck of Bluebird in 2001. The boat has since been fully restored and is on display at the village's Ruskin Museum (open early Mar–early Nov, every day, 10.00am–5.30pm; early Nov–early Mar, Wed–Sun, 10.30am–3.30pm; www.ruskinmuseum.com).

If you have time, take a steam-powered gondola or a standard boat trip on Coniston Water (Coniston Pier, Lake Road, Tel: 015394 32733, www.nationaltrust.org.uk/gondola or Coniston Launch, Tel: 017687 75753; www.conistonlaunch.co.uk).

www.conistontic.org



- **Cumbria Way described in 5 sections (73 miles) with high fell and foul weather variants**
- **high mountains, picturesque lakes, dramatic dales and pretty villages**

The 73-mile Cumbria Way is one of Britain's prettiest and easiest long-distance walks. Undulating paths ease past memorable lakes and low mountain tarns, and through picturesque villages with delightful country pubs and cottages. The central Lake District sections provide some high mountain walking.

This guide also provides exciting alternative mountain days, which link up with the official route, allowing you to mix and match, depending on the weather and your inclination.

- the route can be walked year-round, within a week
- the official route visits Coniston, Tarn Hows, Great Langdale, Stake Pass, Derwentwater, Back o' Skiddaw and Caldbeck



- optional mountain routes climb the Coniston Fells, Glaramara, Skiddaw, Walla Crag, Knott and High Pike

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